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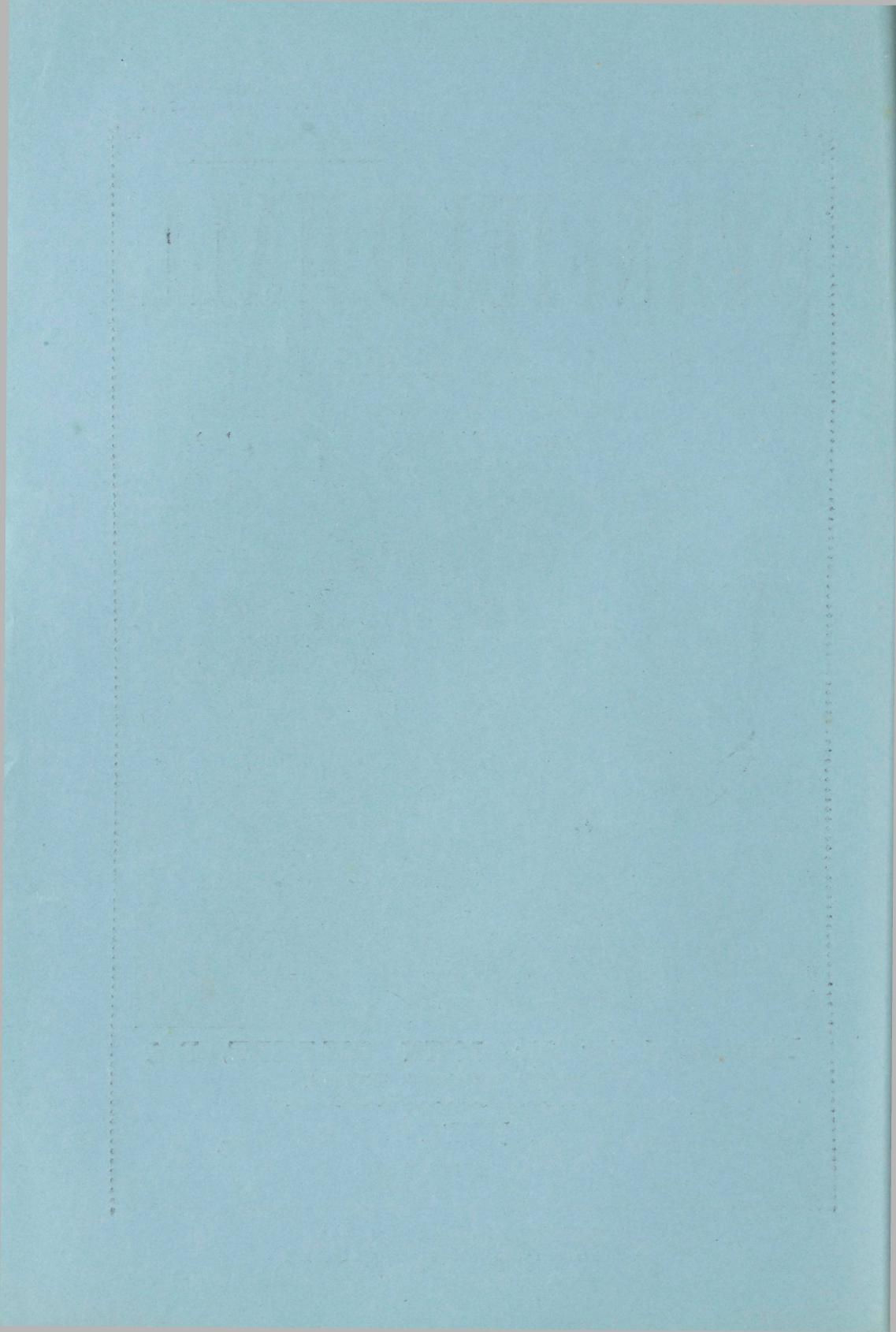


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[PATCH SAVING THE LIFE OF QUEEN MARY.]



he was imprudently building. Three bishops' houses and the parish church of St. Mary were pulled down to furnish materials for the structure. Not content with the first sacrilege, he ordered St. Margaret's, Westminster, to be demolished in order to employ the stones for the same purpose; but the parishioners rose in tumult, and drove away the workmen. He next laid his hands upon a chapel in St. Paul's Churchyard, with a cloister and charnel-house annexed to it; and these edifices, together with the singular old church of St. John of Jerusalem, were made use of to raise his palace. What rendered the matter more odious to the people was, that the tombs and other monuments of the dead were defaced, and the bones carried away to be buried in unconsecrated ground. These proceedings gave such disaffection in the City, that remonstrances were made; and the council, emboldened by assurances of support from the principal nobility, proceeded at once to assert their authority. They sent for the lord mayor and aldermen of London, and commanded them to obey their authority, without any regard to Somerset. They laid the same injunction on the Lieutenant of the Tower, who expressed his resolution to obey them.

No sooner did the Protector hear of the disaffection of the council and the City than he removed the young king from Hampton Court to Windsor Castle, and arming his friends and retainers, resolved to defend himself against all his enemies. But finding that no man of rank, except Cranmer and Paget, adhered to him, he lost all hopes of success, and began to apply to his foes for pardon and forgiveness.

No sooner was this despondency known, than Lord Russell and the Speaker of the House of Commons abandoned him. The latter was bound to him by many obligations; and the former meanly sold him for the earldom of Bedford and a grant of abbey lands, which he degraded himself by receiving at the hands of his enemies. Such is the unworthy origin of the vast fortunes of the house of Bedford. Warwick had thrown off the mask, and gone too far to recede. The council, under his direction, sent dutiful letters to the king, complaining that his uncle, whom they had created Protector on condition that he consented to be guided by their advice, had usurped the whole authority of the realm; that he had, in levying forces against them, and placing them round the person of the king, been guilty of treason. These letters made a considerable impression on the youthful mind of Edward, whose cold manner to his uncle indicated to all about him that the hour of his disgrace had arrived.

Seeing that in the disaffection of his nephew his last stay was gone, Somerset resigned the Protectorship, and was immediately committed to the Tower. Articles of impeachment were drawn up and exhibited against him; and while that haughty, weak, ambitious man was a lonely prisoner in the very cell which had held his brother captive, his daring rival Warwick was raised to the dignity of Duke of Northumberland; the last earl of that name, and first

lover of Anne Boleyn, having died without issue, and his brother, Sir Thomas Percy, being attainted for his share in the Yorkshire rebellion in the late reign.

Somerset was brought to trial before the Marquis of Winchester—created high steward—and a jury of twenty-seven peers. He was acquitted on the charge of treason, but condemned to death for felony, in having conspired against the lives of the council, and executed on the 22nd of January, 1552.

No sooner had Northumberland, as we must now style him, obtained the supreme direction of affairs, than it was observed by the attendants of the young king that his health began gradually to decline. This might have proceeded from innate weakness of constitution; but men began to whisper and assert strange things, not openly, indeed, but under the seal of confidence, which rendered them more terrible.

It was not till the strength of the monarch, both mental and physical, was undermined that the new-made duke ventured to broach the grand scheme which had been the object of so many years of treachery and scheming. He gradually represented to the prince that his two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, had both of them been declared illegitimate by Parliament; and that, although Henry had restored them to their place in the succession by his will, the nation would never consent to see a bastard seated on the throne. That the inevitable consequence of Mary's succession would be the return of the nation to the Church of Rome; that of the young Queen of Scots to make England a province of France, in consequence of her betrothal to the Dauphin; in fact, that these princesses were both legally and morally excluded, and that the legitimate heiress was the Marchioness of Dorset, eldest daughter of the French Queen Mary, by her second husband, the Duke of Suffolk; and that, in the event of her death or resignation, her eldest daughter, Lady Jane Grey, would become her successor. Finding that his arguments made a great impression on the mind of Edward, he next persuaded him to create the Marquis of Dorset Duke of Suffolk, who, as the price of his elevation to that dignity, bestowed the hand of his daughter, Lady Jane Grey, upon Lord Guildford Dudley, Northumberland's fourth son.

It was shortly after the above marriage that a council was summoned by the young king. Cranmer and the judges were invited to assist. Everything denoted that the subject to be debated was one of those on which the lives and fortunes of its mooters, as well as the destiny of a people, sometimes depend.

Edward was seated upon the throne, at the head of a long table, by the sides of which the members of the council had taken their places. Cranmer, as primate was next the king; Northumberland faced him; Sir Edward Montague, chief justice of the Common Pleas, Sir John Baker, Sir Thomas Bromley, and Sir James Hale,

were seated near the chancellor, the Bishop of Ely, who had reluctantly consented to give directions to draw the letters patent which transferred the crown from Mary and Elizabeth to Lady Jane Grey ; but that wily prelate absolutely refused to sign it, or affix the great seal to it, till the judges had previously affixed their signatures ; and it required the personal entreaties of the king ere Cranmer could be prevailed upon to follow the chancellor's example. An expedient was at last hit upon. A special commission was issued by the king and council to the judges, requiring them to draw a patent for the new settlement of the crown ; and a pardon under the great seal was immediately granted them for any offence they might have been guilty of by their compliance. Of all the members, Sir James Hale, although a zealous Protestant, alone refused compliance. Cecil, who afterwards became so distinguished in the reign of Elizabeth, pretended that he only signed as witness to the subscription of the prince.

" You have signed your ruin, my lord," whispered the sturdy Hale, as he followed Cranmer down the staircase of York House, where the council had been held.

" What mean you ? " demanded Cranmer.

" That the letters patent, in the event of our young monarch's death, would become so much waste paper. The emperor will assert the rights of the Princess Mary ; the people, who resent the spoliation of the Church, and still more the corrupt uses to which its wealth has been applied, will rise in their defence. Methought I saw, as I sat at the council-board, a skeleton, with an axe, behind the chair of every one who signed—save one," he added, sorrowfully—" save one."

" And whose was that ? " demanded the primate, with a smile, for he was too enlightened to yield easily to superstition.

" Your grace's," answered the speaker, sorrowfully.

" And what saw you in its place ? " demanded the archbishop.

" A brand," replied the judge, shudderingly—" a blazing torch, such as that the executioner uses when he lights the pile to which some despairing guilty wretch is bound. In vain I tried to persuade myself that my imagination deceived me. The glare of the red flame was not to be mistaken ; like a living thing, instinct with malice, it seemed to leap towards you, eager to reach your robes."

" The effect of an excited imagination," observed the prelate, who, despite his philosophy, could not avoid being struck by the singularity of the speaker's dream, for such he termed it. " You must have slept during the council."

" Your pardon, my lord ; nothing slept at that eventful meeting except the prudence of the members ; and I could well wish, for the love I bear your grace, you had been absent."

" Why so ? " demanded Cranmer, in an uneasy tone of voice ; " the

pardon of the king secures us against charges, even should our enemies prevail."

"Would it secure you against the wrath of Mary? Think you, my lord, the daughter of Katherine of Arragon will ever forgive the man who pronounced her mother's marriage illegal, branded the stain of bastardy upon her own proud brow, and lent no nerveless hand to uproot the ancient faith? Do not deceive yourself. Prudence could not so guard your steps that she would not find a false one; for power seldom lacks means to make occasions which justify its ends."

"True, alas! too true. But Edward, our pious prince, is young, and may recover."

"Never!"

"What mean you?" demanded the churchman.

"Simply that the king has not a year to live," replied Sir James.

"A strange prediction."

"Your grace will find it a true one."

"But on what grounds," exclaimed the unsuspecting prelate, "do you draw such an inference? He is young, and quite recovered from the maladies which last year threatened him, the measles and small-pox."

"That was the time, I think, Lord Robert Dudley was named gentleman of the bedchamber?"

"It was. What then?"

"Nothing, only that his highness's health hath been declining ever since."

"Mean you——?" exclaimed the horror-stricken Cranmer.

"I mean nothing, my good lord, more than my words express, that from the time the Duke of Northumberland placed his son, Lord Robert Dudley, near the person of the king, his highness's health declined. It would puzzle even a lawyer's wit to make treason out of that. Youth dies as well as age. The bud which promises the sweetest flower is oft the earliest plucked."

"Woe—woe to England and her suffering Church!" sighed Cranmer.

"Fear not for the Church," exclaimed the sturdy knight; its life is not like human life, and cannot be destroyed. Farewell, your grace! I shall to my country seat, and wait for better times. Remember my advice: when Edward dies look to yourself, and wisely place the sea betwixt you and the soil of England."

With these words the speakers separated, and entered their barges—Sir James to his house in the City, the primate to his palace at Lambeth, the latter with a heavy heart. The conversation with the knight had given him food for reflection; for, as his friend had hinted, his position was a dangerous one.

After the settlement of the crown was made, with so many suspicious circumstances, Edward visibly declined every day, and

small hopes were entertained of his recovery. To make matters worse, his physicians were dismissed by Northumberland's advice, who prudently, however, obtained an order in council previously ; and the dying youth was put into the hands of an ignorant old woman, who undertook in a little time to restore him to health. After the use of her medicines the bad symptoms increased in a violent degree : he felt a difficulty both of speech and breathing ; his pulse failed, his legs swelled, his colour became livid, and all saw that his end was approaching. Now came Northumberland's last stroke of policy. He caused letters to be written in the name of the council both to the Princess Mary and Elizabeth, desiring their attendance on their brother, whose infirm state of health required the assistance of their counsel and the consolation of their company. His real object was to get them into his power, in order that no opposition might be made to the succession of his daughter-in-law, the unfortunate but innocent Lady Jane Grey.

It was the night before their expected arrival that the guard, by Northumberland's orders, had been doubled round the old palace of Greenwich, where the young king lay. There was an air of gloom in the features of the servitors as they hurried to and fro with noiseless step, fearful to wake an echo which might disturb their dying master. All but the great gates were closed, and there a guard of Swiss were placed with orders to admit all such nobles or members of the council as might arrive, but to suffer none to depart. Many had already fallen into the snare ; others were continually arriving.

" You are riding a dangerous road, my lord," exclaimed a sturdy yeoman, who was mounted on a powerful nag ; " an earldom has been lost by a foolish ride ere this."

" What mean you, knave ? " demanded the horseman to whom the above remark had been addressed. " Is it thus you venture to sport with the Earl of Arundel ? "

" Earls are but men, my lord," replied the stranger ; " hoodwink them, they see no better than the vilest clown, and fall into the snare of the same."

The noble rider was too experienced a courtier not to understand that there was some allusion to the present state of affairs and the summons which he had received to attend the king at Greenwich ; for, as one of the old nobility who still adhered to the ancient faith, Northumberland felt anxious to secure his person. Sir John Bates, an officer of the duke's household, rode near him ; so that in effect, although not in appearance, the earl was a prisoner.

" Thou art an impudent knave," said Arundel, in an altered tone, which showed that he fully understood the speaker's intention was to get speech with him. " Another time I'll speak with thee ; at present, maugre the night, wind, and the rain, I must pursue my journey."

The scene of the above rencontre was Blackheath, about three miles from the ancient palace, and the night, as the speaker had said was a wet and rough one.

"No time like the present, sir earl."

Here Sir John Bates rode between the speakers, and in a peremptory manner ordered the stranger to ride on, observing that he could not permit the earl to be annoyed by a beggar's insolence.

"The beggar's importunity," replied the yeomen, "is better than the gaoler's care. One would think the valiant knight conducted a prisoner or a hostage to Greenwich, rather than a belted earl and an honoured guest, that he is so churlish in his speech to those who accost him."

"Villain!" exclaimed the knight, raising the handle of his heavy riding-whip, and levelling a blow at the speaker, which, had it taken effect, must have proved fatal. Then the intruder, as if terrified at the impending danger, put spurs to his steed, and started off, pursued by the infuriated knight. No sooner had they disappeared in the darkness, than the real object of the pretended flight became apparent; for a second horseman, who had hitherto remained at a distance, rode up to the side of the earl, and entered into a hurried conversation with him.

"Are you the friend of the Princess Mary?" he demanded.

"I am."

"And in communication with her?"

The Earl of Arundel hesitated.

"My lord, moments are precious, for there is not one upon which there does not hang a life. If the Earl of Arundel has belied a long and noble line of ancestry, the faith of his fathers, and forgotten the friends of his youth, let him pass on—his degradation be his punishment; but if his heart be honourable, still let him trust to one whose word was never yet broken to friend or enemy."

"And who is that one?"

The stranger approached so near to the peer, that he felt his breath upon his cheek; and fearing that his intention might be hostile, would have started back; but before he could wheel his horse round, the pretended yeoman raised the slouched barret which concealed his visage, and discovered to him the well-known features of Wolsey's former favourite—the jester, Patch.

"Enough," said the earl; "I know that I may trust thee; but be brief."

"Edward is dying."

"I guessed as much; his illness hath assumed a strange character of late."

"Poison," whispered the jester; "nay, start not, but hear me. Northumberland plays a daring game, and one which might prove successful, had not the Princess Mary firm friends to watch over and protect her. I baffled the villain once, and mean to do so

again, Heaven willing. He has caused letters to be written to her and Elizabeth, in the council's name, commanding their attendance at Court. They will arrive and find the king a corpse."

"Insolent traitor!" muttered the noble between his teeth.

"You, and the Catholic peers, as well as the princesses, have been summoned by the same hellish policy. Like a wary fowler he has spread the net: bid hope farewell, my lord, should he have time to draw it close."

"What mean you? What can the aspiring villain aim at?"

"A prison for the royal maidens; the block and axe for those who espouse their cause."

"What can I do?—my escort," observed the earl, "is composed of Northumberland's followers. I have scarcely half-a-dozen fellows of my own in all the train. Fool, fool!" he added, "to be thus caught."

"While the princesses are at liberty, my lord, your life is safe. You must accompany your gaolers to the palace."

"What then?"

"The moment Edward has drawn the last breath of his young life, cast this ball from the window of the palace upon the marble pavement of the court beneath. It will convey a signal which I shall understand."

Patch placed a small ball, apparently of glass, in the hands of the nobleman, who contrived to thrust it, unseen by his attendants, into the bosom of his doublet. It felt cold as an icicle against his skin.

"What next am I to do?" demanded the earl.

"Take no part in the traitorous proceedings which will follow, as you value your head and your broad lands. But tell me," he added, "have you the token about you which was to serve as a sure pledge between you and the Princess Mary in the hour of danger?"

"I have."

"Give it to me."

Arundel slowly drew from his finger a sapphire ring, graved with the cognisance of his ancient house, and placed it, with a confidence almost amounting to simplicity, in the jester's hand, who, cynic as he was, felt gratified with the reliance upon his honour which the act conveyed.

"It shall not be abused, my lord; and now, farewell! For see," he added, "the chase has ended—for once the sparrowhawk has chased the falcon, but the noble bird despairs to turn and slay him."

As he spoke, the first yeoman who had addressed the Earl of Arundel in his progress galloped up to the speakers, still pursued by the infuriated Sir John, whose steed was almost blown.

"Have you finished?" he demanded of the jester.

"I have."

"And the token?"

"Is in my possession. Farewell, sir earl," said Patch, as the knight approached; "forget not my instructions. When next we meet, Mary will be queen of England, or——"

"Or what?" demanded the peer.

"We shall meet no more."

With these words the horseman rode away just as Sir John Bates rejoined his prisoner; for such in reality the earl considered himself, and was, however courteously the affair was disguised.

"You have had a conference, my lord," exclaimed the knight, who saw that he had been duped.

"Possibly," said the noble, coolly.

"There is treason in this, my lord."

"That treason exists somewhere I have long suspected," said Arundel, impatiently; "but where, time must show; meanwhile, good fellow, as the peers of England are not yet sunk so low as to be accountable for their conduct to every saucy squire or knight invested with a little brief authority, let's drop the subject, and resume our ride towards the palace. The air is almost as unmannerly as thy tongue—the one has ruffled my temper, and the other all but blown the cloak from off my shoulders. Forward, knaves!" he added; "I thirst for a cup of malmsey to warm me."

Thus admonished, Sir John Bates thought it best to take no further notice, but proceed at once with his charge towards the palace. On his way he decided upon not relating to his master the circumstance which had occurred, and the earl, he felt assured, for his own sake, would be silent. It was near midnight when they reached their destination.

In the tapestried chamber of the palace, known by the name of the King's Lodging, were assembled the various members of the council round a heavily carved and gilt couch, upon which lay the person of the expiring monarch. Cranmer was praying at the side of the royal sufferer, whose thin livid lips but faintly articulated the responses to the prayers. Northumberland, like the evil genius of the prince, kept hovering round him, nervously anxious when anyone approached him, as if he feared some dangerous confidence or observation. The nobles present were ill at ease; each felt that, in signing the letters patent changing the order of succession, he had placed his life and the honours of his race in jeopardy. The danger which they had braved when at a distance seemed terrible when near at hand; and but for the fear of Northumberland—whose foreign troops and Northern dependents guarded the palace—they would gladly, one and all, have left him to settle the question of succession with the nation and the Princess Mary as he could.

"Another hostage," whispered the Bishop of Ely, who was chancellor, to Sir Thomas Browne, as the Earl of Arundel entered the royal chamber; "he plays his game with skill."

"But it does not always insure success," was the reply.

The new-comer advanced to the foot of the couch, and bent the knee before the suffering mass which, while it moved and breathed, was king of England. It would have pained a sterner heart than his to behold the fearful alteration which had taken place in the youthful form of the dying Edward. His graceful limbs were swollen from all proportion; and while his body had become unnaturally large, his features were sunk and shrivelled till the expression of the countenance was really ghastly. Such was the influence which Northumberland retained over the mind of the prince, that, even so near his end, his chief anxiety was to secure the fulfilment of the settlement which he had made of the crown and kingdom. To this he was still further urged by his fears for the stability of the Reformation, to which there is every reason to conclude he was devotedly, if not bigotedly, attached.

"Welcome, Arundel!" he muttered with difficulty, and at the same time extending his hand; "you are come in time to see the last of Edward."

"Not so. I trust to Heaven that your grace has many years of health in store. You are young, and may recover. Your highness's physicians are most skilful."

There was a peculiar look which passed between the members of the council and the duke, by whose orders the physicians had been removed.

"I have no physicians," said the king; "perhaps it might have been better had I trusted them."

"It might, indeed," said the earl.

"I sent for you," added the royal sufferer, who had been well instructed in his lesson, "first, as you were the friend of my father; secondly, that you might sign the patent by which, with the advice and consent of our council, we have regulated the succession to the crown."

"Your grace," said the earl, seriously—"your father's will has already settled that. Your royal sisters—"

"Are bastards," fiercely interrupted Northumberland, "and incapable of reigning."

"Yes—yes," added the king, "Dudley—he always called him by his family name—is right. Besides," he added, "the holy faith might suffer should Mary succeed me. Elizabeth—yes, I am sorry for Elizabeth."

As this last observation fell upon the ear of Cranmer, he regretted that he had not availed himself of this partiality of the dying prince for the daughter of Anne Boleyn to facilitate her accession to the throne. Her Protestantism was undoubted, and she was his god-daughter—a tie in that age almost superstitiously respected.

"You will sign it?" demanded Edward, anxious to have the assent of so influential a person as the Earl of Arundel, whose

acquiescence would entrain that of a great number of Catholic families in the same arrangement.

"I must have time to consider, my dear lord," replied the peer, anxious not to irritate the sufferer. "If they be legal, the letters patent can receive no additional authority from my approval or otherwise. I have a duty to my country and myself——"

"Which you shall have time well to consider of at the Tower," said Northumberland. "Think not, my lord, we fear your name or influence. Accusations of disaffection had been brought against you, and his highness wished to convince himself if they were true or groundless. He is convinced. What, ho!" he added, "let a boat be manned and a party of the yeomen of the guard convey my lord of Arundel close prisoner to the Tower."

"No," said Edward, faintly attempting to raise himself from his couch of suffering.

"It must be so, my dear lord," whispered Northumberland, with but little affectation, even of reverence, for he felt that the speaker in a few minutes would be past asserting or expressing his wishes.

"It shall not be so!" exclaimed Edward, with an effort to make himself heard. "My lord, I charge you on your allegiance that no harm befall our cousin of Arundel; he must not be pressed in this. Perhaps it might have been wiser if others had considered it as well."

"He is a traitor!" exclaimed the exasperated duke.

"Robert Dudley, thou liest to thy teeth. Thou art the traitor, and this dying prince thy victim. Who dismissed his attendants," he continued, "to try the drugs of poisoners and charlatans?"

"Poisoners!" repeated Cranmer aghast; "no—no! It is too horrible!"

"Poisoners?" said Edward, the word for the first time waking a strange suspicion in his soul. "Listen to me, Dudley. From the hour I smelt the flowers you gave me on my birthday I have had a sickness in my heart; their perfume has never been absent from my sense; but poison—impossible—no—no—the boy who trusted you, raised you to honour, loved you like a father, has never fallen a victim to so black a treachery. You did not, could not do it."

"Rather a thousand deaths myself," exclaimed the duke, throwing himself at the side of the couch. "O my dear master, could my heart's blood, poured drop by drop, assuage one pang, or lengthen your life one day, I'd give it freely."

"I am sure of Dudley," replied Edward, trying to smile, and at the same time extending his hand in sign of renewed confidence. "I am sure of it. Stay by me, and let me have no more brawls. Peace—peace should dwell in the chamber of a dying king. I am going!—pray for me father; pray for me."

The excitement of the dispute between Northumberland and Arundel had been too much for the exhausted sufferer, and his

spirit gradually sank, like the wick of an unfed lamp expiring for want of oil. He expired in the seventeenth year of his age, grasping with touching confidence the hand of Dudley.

No sooner was he assured that the final breath had parted than Northumberland sprang upon his feet, and, advancing to the centre of the room, exclaimed :

“ God save Queen Jane ! ”

“ Amen ! ” added Cranmer, solemnly, at the same time with gentle hands closing the eyes of the inanimate Edward.

Arundel advanced towards the window, and, following the instructions he had received, cast the ball he had so mysteriously obtained upon the pavement of the court-yard. It broke without any detonating explosion, and a lofty column of violet-coloured flame illuminated the old towers of the palace, shooting up into the air considerably above them. Fortunately, the action had been unobserved.

“ Treachery ! ” exclaimed the duke, who, with several members of the council, had advanced towards the window. “ Have we traitors here ? ”

Each regarded his companion with mistrust ; like men who had committed some crime, they feared that one would denounce the other.

“ Perdition ! ” added Northumberland, as he perceived that the signal-fire was answered by a similar column on the opposite side of the Thames—“ there seems a preconcerted code of signals. This must be looked to. In the mean while, my lords, until we have proclaimed the Lady Jane, and taken such measures as the safety of the kingdom may require, I hold it prudent that the council do not dissolve, but remain in permanency, attached to the executive, to advise and to control it.”

The proposal was agreed to, and the Earl of Arundel was, by the consent of all, consigned a prisoner to the keep of the old palace, where several strong rooms to serve as dungeons, in case of emergency, had been preserved.

Cranmer remained praying by the royal corpse, absorbed in bitter, deep reflections, for he felt that a crisis was at hand, not only for the Church, but for himself, and he almost felt inclined to follow the advice which Sir James Hale had hinted at, and seek safety in Holland. Had he fortunately done so, how foul a page had been spared in England’s annals !

“ Let Everil, and the mad enthusiast he calls his friend, but follow my instructions,” muttered Northumberland to himself, as he retired from the chamber of death to hold consultation with the council, “ and Fortune, I defy thee ! My blood—mine ! ” he added, “ shall fill the throne of England.”

Like many other dreamers, he was doomed to be deceived.

On the morning after the death of Edward VI., a gallant train of

nobles and knights was passing over the heath at Hoddesden ; they were both preceded and followed by a clump of spears, consisting of the followers of Sir Henry Beddingfield and Sir Henry Jerningham, two of the most ancient families of Norfolk, and devoted to the old religion. On receiving the summons of her dying brother, Mary had hastened to set out upon her journey ; but, with her usual forethought, she sent word to several of the Catholic nobility of her journey and intended route ; so that by the time she advanced towards the metropolis, the followers of those who came under pretence of doing her honour so completely outnumbered the attendants of young Everil and his companions, whom Northumberland had sent to escort his victim, that she found herself in a position, if necessary, to defy them.

"Mark you how the Papists throng her passage ?" whispered Everil to his companion, a tall, thin young man, who rode beside him. "Should she succeed to the crown, woe to this now Protestant land."

"She never shall succeed," was the cool reply.

Everil fixed his eye upon the speaker as if to read his very thought, but the expression of his countenance was calm as usual. A close observer might, perhaps, have imagined that there was a degree of insanity, of that peculiar kind which results from religious enthusiasm, in the sullen expression of his deep blue eye and attenuated features, which were sharp and almost painfully intellectual.

Every line in their expressive lineaments was thought—deep, morbid, soul-consuming thought.

While advancing in the freshness of the morning, two cavaliers were observed directing their foaming steeds towards them. They were Patch and his old friend Walter. Everil at once recognised them, and a frown upon his gloomy brow marked how little pleasure the rencontre gave him. His companion pulled his beaver yet closer over his brow, as if he wished to avoid being recognised. The two horsemen wheeled round to avoid the spearmen who preceded the cavalcade of the princess, and directed their steeds towards the centre. When they arrived within bow-shot of the principal personages, Sir Henry Beddingfield left the side of the Lady Mary, with whom he had been conversing, and spurred his horse to meet them.

"Whence come you ?" he demanded.

"From Greenwich," was the reply.

"And whither go you ?"

"I suspect," said Patch, "our journey ends here. We would have speech of the Princess Mary."

"Impossible."

"Very likely," was the cool rejoinder ; "but we must see her highness, for all that. Know, Sir Henry, you have to do with a

man who has long dealt in impossibilities, and knows how to appreciate them. Give her highness this token."

He pulled from his finger the sapphire ring given him by the Earl of Arundel, and presented it to Sir Henry Beddingfield, who regarded it, for a moment, in silence.

"What thinkst thou, sir knight, of the doctrine of impossibilities now?" demanded Patch.

"Follow," said the noble. "I know this ring, and the name of him who sent it."

Riding hastily before, Sir Henry whispered a few words to the princess, who instantly checked her steed and dismounted on the heath. Walter thought she looked unusually pale as they approached; for the rest, her demeanour was calm and self-possessed as ever.

"Now, your intelligence?" she demanded, in a low harsh tone; "our brother?"

"Sleeps with his royal sire," replied Patch, bending the knee; "God save Queen Mary!"

In the enthusiasm of the moment, the two noblemen who were standing near repeated the cry; the spearmen who followed them caught up the shout, and in a few moments the heath resounded with the cry of "God save Queen Mary!"

"We thank you, gentlemen," she exclaimed, without appearing in the least excited by the unexpected intelligence; "but reserve your shouts till we are seated on the throne which treason would hold from us. Is't not so, old friend?" she added, turning to the jester.

"Letters patent have passed the great seal, setting aside your majesty's and the Lady Elizabeth's claim in favour of the Lady Jane Grey. London is in the hands of Northumberland's troops, and the Tower is garrisoned by his creatures."

"So then it would seem I am a queen without a kingdom. Heaven bear me witness, this crown hath fallen at an untimely hour; but since it hath fallen," she added, proudly, "upon our unworthy brows, Heaven will doubtless give us strength to bear it. Our council has been brief, friends, but 'tis ended. Sir Henry Beddingfield——"

"Madam," said the gallant nobleman, bending his knee to the ground before her.

"To you we intrust the care of our royal person. Conduct us back to Framlingham. You, my faithful Jerningham, write letters to our nobles and the mayors of our cities and towns, commanding them to assemble their followers and the citizens in arms to defend our rights. Pardon to those who submit."

"Pardon to all?" demanded the party to whom the order had been given.

"No," she replied, passionately; "not even for the crown of

which they would deprive me, will Mary stain her lips with falsehood? There are amongst them those who, if I reign, shall pay their treasons and their crimes with life—men whom Mary can never pardon. Now then, once more to horse, and on to Framlingham!"

The speaker's hand was on the saddle to remount the palfrey standing near her, when the young companion of Everil, who had been Northumberland's messenger with the letter to Mary, rushed between the gentlemen who surrounded her. Madness was in his eye: the shouts which proclaimed her accession had unhinged his mind. Deeming himself called upon by God to save His Church—proud in the holiness of his mission, he drew a long Venetian knife from his belt, and rushed to his sacrifice of fanaticism and murder, exclaiming:

"Die, Jezebel, in the pride of thy sin, ere yet the land is drunk with the blood of saints!"

The blow must have proved fatal but for the presence of mind of Patch, who darted between the princess and the fanatic, and received the long blade of the weapon through the fleshy part of his arm. The assassin was instantly secured.

"Art hurt, old friend?" demanded Walter.

"Not much," was the reply; "but who is the mad fool who sought his sovereign's life?"

"Behold him," cried the youth.

The jester turned, and a sudden sickness came over him as he recognised in the speaker the son of his old master Wolsey, Louis d'Auverne.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

ON hearing of the flight of the Princess Mary to Framlingham, Northumberland found that further dissimulation was fruitless; he went therefore at once to Sion House, accompanied by the Duke of Suffolk, the Earl of Pembroke, and the members of the council. Approaching his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane, who resided there, the messengers sank upon their knees, and offered their homage to her as queen of England. Jane, who was ignorant of the young king's death, and the letters patent which had been executed in her favour, received them with equal surprise and grief. It was long, very long, before the entreaties of her parents, whom she tenderly loved, or the remonstrances of Northumberland, could induce her to accept the crown. Indeed, it was the influence of her husband which ultimately wrung a reluctant assent from her quivering lips.

"Evil will come of this, my lords," she exclaimed—"evil to all of us! God permitteth not the inheritance of the orphan to be wrongfully taken. Speedily, speedily will He avenge it."

The words of the youthful speaker were but too prophetic.



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